

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I have given directions that the estimates for the next year shall be prepared, for the purpose of being laid before you.

They will be framed with a careful regard to the exigencies of the public service.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

Your attention will be called to the laws which regulate the representation of the people in Parliament, with a view to consider what amendments may be safely and beneficially made therein.

Measures will be submitted for your consideration for simplifying and amending the laws relating to real property, and also for consolidating and amending several important branches of the criminal law.

I confidently commit to your wisdom the great interests of my empire; and I fervently pray, that the blessing of Almighty God may attend your Counsels, and may guide your deliberations to those ends which are dearest to my heart, the happiness and prosperity of my loyal and faithful people.

India Board, December 4, 1857.

THE following Despatches have been received at the East India House:

No. 1.

Lieutenant-Colonel J. D. Macpherson, Military Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, to the Military Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 400.

SIR, *Lahore, August 8, 1857.*

I AM instructed, by Sir John Lawrence, K.C.B., Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, to forward, for the information of the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council, a copy of Brigadier-General Nicholson's despatch, relative to the defeat and dispersion of the Sealkote mutineers, together with a copy of a brigade order issued by the Brigadier-General to the troops under his command.

2. A report of the defeat of the mutineers has already been submitted in the political department, No. 28, dated 18th ultimo, since which fully 150 of the mutinous soldiers who had escaped, have been seized and executed.

I have, &c.,

J. D. MACPHERSON, Lieutenant-Colonel,
Military Secretary to the Chief Commissioner.

No. 2.

Brigadier-General Nicholson, commanding Punjab Moveable Column, Goordaspore, to the Adjutant-General of the Army.

SIR, *Head Quarters, before Delhi, Goordaspore, July 19, 1857.*

I HAVE the honor herewith to forward, for the information of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, an account of my proceedings, and of the column under my command, since the date of my last letter (the 27th ultimo).

2. In it I reported the disarming of the 33rd and 35th Regiments, Native Infantry, and the reasons which had induced me to have recourse to that measure.

3. On the same date I commenced retracing my steps from Philour, and on the 5th July, encamped with the column at Umritsur.

4. I selected this station for an encampment, merely on account of its centrality, my position there enabling me to afford speedy aid, if required, either to Lahore or the Jullundur Doab, while, at the same time, it overawed the Manjha, and rendered hopeless any attempt to mutiny on the part of the 59th Regiment Native Infantry.

5. On the morning of the 7th, I received intelligence of the mutiny of the 14th Native Infantry, at Jelum, and that it was successfully holding against the force sent to disarm it, under Colonel Ellice. I waited throughout the day and the following night, in the hope of hearing of the defeat of the 14th, but this expectation not having been realized, and unfavourable accounts continuing to arrive, I reluctantly felt myself obliged to disarm the 59th Native Infantry, at sunrise on the 8th.

6. I feel bound, however, to place on record my belief that, both in conduct and feeling, this regiment was quite an exceptional one at the present crisis.

It had neither committed itself in any way, nor do I believe that, up to the day it was disarmed, it had any intention of committing itself, and I may deeply regret that, even as a precautionary measure, it should have become my duty to disarm it. I beg very strongly to recommend this corps, both as regards officers and men, to the favourable consideration of Government.

7. Early on the morning of the 10th, I received intelligence by telegraph, that the troops at Sealkote, consisting of the 46th Native Infantry, and the right wing 9th Light Cavalry, had broken out into open mutiny the previous morning. This intelligence was confirmed half an hour later, by a musician of the 46th Native Infantry, who rode in express with the news. I immediately disarmed the left wing 9th Cavalry, with the column, a step I had refrained from when disarming the 33rd and 35th Regiments, lest it should prematurely excite the wing at Sealkote.

8. In the course of the day, information reached me from various quarters that the Sealkote troops had marched in an easterly direction the previous evening. Their object was evidently to plunder the station of Goordaspore, and get the 2nd Irregular Cavalry there to join them; they would then no doubt have proceeded, via Noorpoor and Hushyarpore, to Jullundur, whence they would have made the best of their way to Delhi. At Noorpoor they expected to be joined by the 4th Regiment Native Infantry, and at Hushyarpore, by the 16th Irregular Cavalry.

9. It was evident that, as the mutineers had two days' start, and as Goordaspore was something over 41 miles from my encampment, no time was to be lost. I, therefore, decided on reaching that station in a single forced march, and this, with the aid of ekkas and ponies for the infantry, was successfully accomplished in less than 20 hours.

10. The mutineers were, at this date (the 11th), at Noorkobe, about 15 miles on the right bank of the Ravee. Fearing that, if I opposed their passage of the river, they might break away southwards and so escape me, I decided on allowing them to cross without molestation, and accordingly remained at Goordaspore until 9 a.m., the following morning, when, hearing that they had commenced crossing by a ford at the Trimmoo Ferry,